

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, October 16, 2014, 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 214, 2nd Floor, County-City Building, 555 S. 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tim Francis, Jim Johnson, Berwyn Jones, Jim McKee, and Greg Munn; (Jim Hewitt, Liz Kuhlman absent). Ed Zimmer, Stacey Groshong Hageman and Amy Huffman of the Planning Department; Kevin Abourezk from the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Chair Greg Munn called the meeting to order and acknowledged the posting of the Open Meetings Act in the room.

Munn requested a motion approving the minutes for regular meeting held September 18, 2014. Motion for approval made by Johnson, seconded by McKee and carried 5-0: Francis, Johnson, Jones, McKee and Munn voting 'yes'; Hewitt, Kuhlman absent.

The opportunity was given for persons with limited time or with an item not appearing on the agenda to address the Commission.

APPLICATION BY SCOOTER'S FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 151 N. 8TH STREET IN THE HAYMARKET LANDMARK DISTRICT
PUBLIC HEARING: **OCTOBER 16, 2014**

Members present: Francis, Johnson, Jones, McKee and Munn; Hewitt, Kuhlman absent.

Ed Zimmer stated that there was an initial phone call from a sign company about a new sign for Scooter's, but it did not mature. This item will be brought forward at a future meeting if more develops.

APPLICATION BY KEVIN RHINEHART FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR WORK AT 1717 D STREET, THE MYRON WHEELER HOUSE, A DESIGNATED LANDMARK
PUBLIC HEARING: **OCTOBER 16, 2014**

Members present: Francis, Johnson, Jones, McKee and Munn; Hewitt, Kuhlman absent.

Zimmer stated this request is to create a second exit from the units on the 2nd floor of the Wheeler house at 1717 D Street. In discussion with Building and Safety, one issue with the proposed site plan is that the proposed stair would come down within the 5 foot side yard. As part of the main building, it cannot be within that side yard. It is possible to adjust the side yard through special permit procedure, which would begin here and go on to Planning Commission. The process was used successfully in the case of the Griswald house in Piedmont for the carriage house. The applicant was just informed of this. The only way to get this site plan approved will be through the special permit procedure, so the matter is before Commission, but cannot be fully resolved today.

Munn asked how close the house is to neighbors.

Zimmer answered that the property to the west is a six-plex which has a side yard setback, but is still in close proximity. On the other side, there is a single family brick house. The applicant's mechanical equipment is located on that side, so even though there is more space there, it is in use.

Kevin Rhinehart, applicant, stated he purchased this foreclosed home and began this project approximately three and a half years ago. The house was close to being torn down. It had been a triplex as far back as could be found, up until the early 1990s. An electrical inspection done for a commercial building permit revealed that the home was not zoned correctly. A special permit was obtained so the project could be completed. The framing, plumbing, electrical, H-VAC, and insulation were completed under a commercial building permit. Six months ago, it was discovered that a second exit would be required. After confirming with Building and Safety, a site plan was put together. The project is about three months away from being completed, and this is a final obstacle to overcome in order to satisfy fire safety codes on the building.

Jones asked if the interior stair was removed.

Rhinehart replied that the stair, woodwork, and foyer are still there but would have to be rebuilt in order to be reusable. The doors do not have locks or handles.

Francis asked if there was a common entrance.

Rhinehart stated that the main entrance is at the back of the house.

Francis asked if at some point there had been a front stairway that came down to a common foyer.

Rhinehart confirmed that there was at one point, but at the time of purchase, it had been destroyed so that it existed neither as a tri-plex, nor as a single family.

Jones asked for confirmation that the foyer still exists.

Rhinehart said yes.

Munn stated that when the plan was first viewed, he initially questioned the need for an egress out of the kitchen, but then realized it was due to the layout of the upper floor units.

Rhinehart stated he looked at alternatives and considered what could be the best and most workable solution.

Jones asked the extent to which returning use to the front stairs alter the upstairs plan.

Rhinehart said and it would destroy the kitchen already there. The difficulty is that the project got so far through the process, and this requirement was only recently discovered. He stated he is not a contractor or architect and owns no other properties that would require this. Even without all of the completed remodeling, this would have come up during the application for an apartment license.

Francis suggested it could be converted back into a deluxe duplex.

Jones said this would not be as big of an issue if it was not a listed building.

Zimmer noted that it would not be a triplex, in that case. The only reason the triplex is allowed here is because of the Landmark status.

Rhinehart added that it was the only way the project could be completed. The biggest frustration is being over three years into the project, using personal finances, and being so near completion. He will live on the property as soon as the plumbing is complete.

Munn asked if the plan is to to add a window in addition to the other two, that tenants are able to crawl through in case of fire.

Rhinehart said yes. The other windows already meet egress standards so there is no need to make changes to them.

Munn confirmed that the standards for the windows certain height off floor, and certain size.

Rhinehart said that is correct. It allows access for firefighters.

Zimmer asked if a railing is proposed on top of the porch roof.

Rhinehart confirmed that it would be a railed walkway.

Zimmer pointed out that the second floor corner porch would lose its exterior walls.

Munn suggested extending the balcony to essentially become that walkway.

Francis suggested making walkway the same depth as the balcony so it is partially covered.

Kevin expressed interest in the different ideas.

Munn said there are ways to minimize impact to the straight-on view.

Rhinehard agreed that is a possibility. It was written as a 3 foot walkway because that is what is required by Building and Safety. The original design was to put a 3 foot balcony the entire length of the wall.

Munn offered more alternative ideas to help the design better keep the character of existing structure.

Zimmer asked if it would meet code and be possible to have a solid door instead of a window, that could be clad in the same pattern as the wall.

Rhinehart said that is also a possibility, but he feels that he can make a window match the house look like it belonged there, as opposed to a door.

McKee stated he thinks there could be ways to make it blend in much better than the current design. The balcony does not need to run clear to the front of the house. There should be a way to preserve that corner.

Munn asked if there were cabinets along the north wall of the interior.

Rhinehart said yes, and large appliances.

Munn wondered if there is a possibility of making a feature of the door and creating a usable balcony.

Clark deVries, Near South Neighborhood, stated that the floor elevation in that room is below the roof edge, so a door would be two feet off the floor. In terms of the construction, any changes must be built to last. deVries went on to say that If a house is designated, any changes on the exterior are a big deal, but inside changes can be made. In this house there are no inside preservation issues. Near South would be very interested in making sure the designation of 'historic' means something, especially on the exterior. Rearrangements in the interior could preserve the exterior.

Rhinehart stated that he cut no corners on this project.

Munn stated that the problem is that the project has come so far.

deVries asked why there was not requirement to submit plans to Building and Safety earlier. It was his understanding that those must be approved. He asked if an interior wall

was built.

Rhinehart stated he was not asked to submit plans. He did not build interior walls.

Zimmer asked about the purpose of the permit previously obtained and whether or not Building and Safety was aware of the triplex issue.

Rhinehart replied that the permit was to replace a wall. He was not made aware of this exit requirement until recently.

deVries asked if the first floor stairway is still in place and if consideration was given to making that a common entryway area and if an architect was consulted. He stated that more time should be spent looking at the interior.

Rhinehart confirmed that the stairway is still there, but would have to be rebuilt to be functional. Many options, including the common area, were considered and an architect was consulted. The front stairs would disrupt the upstairs kitchen. There is a third bedroom and an existing bath underneath. He clarified the location of the front foyer in relation to other rooms. He explained that the way the home is wired and metered would also create obstacles for creating the common front entrance.

Jones stated that he would like to preserve the integrity of the home and that Mr. Rhinehart should make another effort at considering interior changes. He feels for the difficulty of this situation. The project should not have come this far without knowledge of this.

Rhinehart went into further detail about the layout of the rooms, interior work that was done, and location of plumbing.

Jones proposed that this proposal come forward again next month and that an architect is consulted to see if any new solutions arise.

Rhinehart asked if the Commissioners were looking for alternate interior designs. Jones answered that it should be considered, but added that there could be a better design for the exterior stairs.

deVries stated that the neighborhood hopes to avoid appendages to the existing exterior and hopes to keep it as original as possible.

Munn stated that at times, that is not viable and reasonable and that compromises must be made. Although the Commission wants to preserve what is there, it would be unfortunate if this venture fails or if the function of the house is lost because there are demands for interior changes. It also seems inappropriate to tell a property owner what to do beyond the extent of preservation.

Rhinehart stated that he put his own time and money into this project and it is a bad feeling

to have come so far without any knowledge of this requirement.

McKee noted that if Mr. Rhinehart had not taken this project on, this house may have been lost altogether. He has made many improvements and it should not be forgotten that he already saved this house once.

Rhinehart said that he understands wanting to make changes only to the interior, but the cost of doing that would far exceed that of the exterior staircase.

Zimmer suggested that since the proposal before Commission today cannot be carried out without special permit, the discussion be carried over one month, should Mr. Rhinehart choose to file that application.

Rhinehart added that he is very proud of the project and will bring photos to show it off. New proposals will be considered for the exterior. Interior options will also be reconsidered, but the gut feeling is that they will be too expensive.

Zimmer said that the extra time will allow more pieces and more extensive visuals to be brought together. If an interior solution is found, it saves everyone from going through the more extensive special permit process.

Rhinehart stated he will follow up and work out more details.

Johnson added that it is better if neighbors can all agree on the direction of the project.

Staff Report

Zimmer stated that the Haymarket tour book is at the printer. Stacey made a beautiful bird's eye view map. It will be nice to have that fresh and new again. In addition to the book, Downtown Lincoln Association worked with Historic Haymarket Association to create a nice website. The tour book will be available there and visitors will be able to click on the sites on the map and get historical information and photos. They have support from the Visitor and Convention Bureau for the publication, so the first run will be given away, and then it will probably be issued again at a cost.

There is a discussion happening in the East Campus neighborhood regarding Farmhouse Fraternity, which is at the corner of a Historical District on the south boundary line. The current proposal is to continue occupying the current building while a new one is constructed on the east end of the property. After the new building is complete, the old structure would be torn down to regain their parking lot. Initial conversations have suggested that neighbors do not want to see the historic house come down or the new structure closer to the street, where it blocks the open view on Idylwild. The design as proposed is International Style, which doesn't have much to do with the surrounding neighborhood. If it had a special permit or anything similar, it would come to the Commissioners. If they do a higher resident count, the neighborhood would like to see

them elsewhere. It is unfortunate that when the Historic District was created, there was a nice relationship between the neighbors and the fraternity house. That resource has been squandered recently, and the neighborhood no longer feels that the house continues to be an asset to the neighborhood. The AGR house achieved both what the neighborhood asked, and what the fraternity set out to do, to the credit of both groups. That experience showed the willingness of the neighbors to work with these projects, but they remain very active and aware on this new question.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.